



CLEAN WATER IS UP TO YOU

By Carol Hillestad for the Brodhead Watershed Association

Are You Wasting Perfectly Good Waste?

April 2022

If you trash vegetable peels and apple cores, eggshells, grass clippings, and the like, you're wasting a lot of perfectly good waste.

In fact, up to 95 percent of stuff that could be composted ends up in landfills instead. And, no, no matter how much we wish it were true, food scraps don't break down organically in the oxygen-starved depths of a landfill.

You already know how it works. You keep a smallish container on the counter in the kitchen, where those peelings and other kitchen waste go. Throw in the antique carrots and rock-hard bread no one will eat and take it out to your compost pile or bin as needed. Add layers of brown and green yard waste — leaves and twigs, dead weeds and grass clippings. Repeat.

Soon you'll have layers of dark, crumbly, nutrient-rich compost. As a top-dressing or soil-builder in your garden, compost adds nutrients and allows rainwater to sink into the ground instead of racing away in a storm.

Maybe you knew that, too. But did you know that composting reduces or prevents the release of methane gas as the organic matter breaks down?

Methane is 26 times more potent than carbon dioxide! So composting is good for our water — and lets you do your bit for taming one of the fiercest greenhouse gases.

Some municipalities (like Chestnuthill Township in Monroe County) accept your good organic waste and will compost it for you — and share the rich results.

The Waste Authority in Blakeslee hosts classes on how to compost. For details go to <https://thewasteauthority.com/composting-classes/>

And for a comprehensive composting guide go to <https://extension.psu.edu/home-composting-a-guidefor-home-gardeners>

This spring, start putting your “waste” to work!

